

## **Key Issues in Teaching EFL/ESL Intensive Reading: A Videotaped Self-Observation Report**

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### **Abstract**

This paper reports a videotaped self-observation of a 47 minute ESL reading lesson. The focus of the lesson was on intensive reading. The entire teaching session was videotaped; the videotaped data were analyzed using (a) ethnographic microanalysis, (b) selective verbatim transcripts, (c) Seating Chart Observation REcord (SCORE), (d) conversational analysis, and (e) Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF) sequences. The paper addresses key issues on the nature of reading questions and the nature of teacher-student and student-student interactions at pre-, while-, and post-reading stages. It also addresses how the intensive reading lesson could be integrated with other language skills and what roles a teacher, students, and teaching materials played. Moreover, the paper highlights an issue on how all of the reading class activities analyzed were connected to the SLA theories. This self-observation report has pedagogical implications for the implementation of intensive reading programs in EFL contexts, such as in Indonesia.

**Keywords:** EFL/ESL contexts, intensive reading, self-observation, video recording.

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Self-observation or self-monitoring can be a mediating tool for teachers to do vibrant professional development, and more crucially, self-observation can be used to foster “an awareness of what the teacher’s current knowledge, skills, and attitudes are and the use of such information as the basis for self-appraisal” (Richards & Farrell, 2005, p. 34). Richards and Farrell elaborate that self-observation enables a teacher to record her or his own teaching practices, thereby providing an objective, descriptive, and critical account of it.

Further, Stanley (1998) argues that self-observation is one of the most powerful tools for a teacher to practice reflective teaching. In this regard, a teacher can look at what she or he did in the classroom, think about why she or he did it, and reflect if it worked. In short, self-observation can provide a language teacher with a venue for doing reflection-in-action, reflection-on-action, and reflection-for-action. These terms mean that a teacher can examine when she or he looks at her or his teaching in the moment (reflect-in-action) or in retrospect (reflect-on-action) in order to examine the reasons and beliefs underlying their actions and generate alternative actions for the future (reflect-for-action).

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Thus, through self-observation, teachers can explore their teaching to see the teaching differently (Gebhard, 1999) and help them better understand their own teaching practices and make decisions about the practices they were unaware of before doing self-observation and might wish to change (Richards & Farrell, 2005). Finally, self-observation can be a useful tool for practicing teachers to explore and gain a critical self-awareness of their own teaching beliefs, attitudes, and practices.

In response to the benefits of self-observation, as succinctly pinpointed above, this paper reports a videotaped self-observation on “an ESL intensive reading lesson.” The goal of the paper is to provide critical issues in teaching intensive reading that EFL reading teachers may take into account. Overall, the paper treats self-observation methods, data analyses and discussions, the use of video and reflection in higher education and teaching, and conclusions.

## **Self-Observation Methods**

### ***The Nature of the Lesson***

The lesson was designed for teaching intensive reading. The lesson ran for 47 minutes, and it was conducted in Leonard Hall 205, an American university, from 17:10 p.m. to 17:57 p.m. on Wednesday, March 19, 2008. This class was part of the Introductory College ESL English Course, and designed for introducing ESL students with an intermediate level of English proficiency to five reading skills as defined by Barrett (1972). These skills include (1) literal comprehension like recognition of characters, places, and time, recognition of a sequence, and recognition of character traits; (2) reorganization concerned with classifying persons, things, and places into groups; (3) inferential comprehension such as inferring main ideas, conjecturing about what might have happened or will happen when no explicit statements are included in the text, and inferring character traits; (4) evaluation like judgments of worth, desirability, and acceptability (decisions of good, bad, right, and wrong); and (5) appreciation concerned with verbalizing feelings about the selections and demonstrating sensitivity to or empathy with characters or events. In other words, the class was tailored to equip ESL students with the five basic intensive reading skills.

### ***Participants***

Five international students participated in the intensive reading lesson, including (1) one Portuguese-speaking Brazilian female, (2) two Arabic-speaking males from Saudi Arabia, (3) one Taiwanese-Chinese speaking female from Taiwan, and (4) one Amharic-Italian speaking female from Ethiopia. The Brazilian participant is a freshman majoring in international studies at an American university, and she has been in the USA for one year. One Arab participant is an American Language Institute (ALI) student, and he has been in the USA for one year and two months. He would enroll in engineering science at an American university. Another Arab participant is a freshman majoring in communication studies at an American university, and he has been in the USA for eight months. The Taiwanese participant is an ALI student at an American university, and she has been in

the USA for a one year student exchange program. She has been in the USA since the last August 2007. She is a junior student majoring information communication technology (ICT) at one of the Taiwanese colleges. Lastly, the Ethiopian participant is a freshman majoring in nursing at an American university, and has been in the USA since the last August 2007. All of the participants' ages range from 19 to 24. These participants were chosen because they are college ESL freshmen with an intermediate level of English proficiency, and they have different cultural backgrounds and genders. Throughout this paper, the participants are identified for anonymity, as follows: the Arab male participant (S1<sub>m</sub>), the Taiwanese female participant (S2<sub>f</sub>), the Brazilian female participant (S3<sub>f</sub>), another Arab male participant (S4<sub>m</sub>), and the Ethiopian female participant (S5<sub>f</sub>).

### ***A Negotiated Intensive Reading Lesson***

All of the participants were informed of this teaching session one week before the session began. First, the participants were asked to fill out the University's IRB approved consent form verifying that they did wish to participate in the lesson, and their participation was voluntary. I also informed the participants that any information on the observational data was kept confidential. Moreover, I informed them of the data would be published in a public domain (e.g., a journal publication), but the participants' identities remained confidential. For a lesson schedule, I contacted them by call personally until all of the participants were willing to spend their time on this lesson. This is a sort of negotiation for time because I had to assure that all of the participants had no time conflict with their personal schedules. More crucially, I also informed the participants that the session would be videotaped, and the videotaped data would be analyzed for the teacher's self reflection. None of the participants objected to the video recording of the session. Thus, all of the participants were well informed of the 47 minute long lesson, thereby allowing me to build transparency and trust in the participants.

### ***Teaching Material***

I designed the teaching material based on a genre-based approach because it helps students build an awareness of rhetoric, content, and linguistics (Hyon, 2002). In designing the material, I used a reading text from online stories from "the ESL Fast Website" in which the title was about "Searching for a Missing Husband," and I designed reading activities on the basis of the text. That topic was chosen because it characterizes a narrative text type in which the features of the text include orientation or background information (i.e., characters and events), and problems or complications (e.g., the problems that the main character encountered), and resolutions (the solutions to the problems). The text chosen is an open-ended story, which challenged the students to predict what would happen in the end of the story or no resolution in the story; thereby fostering students' creative and imaginative thinking.

Furthermore, the content of the story has moral messages/values because the story tells how the main character has been looking for her missing husband with courage, for example. In short, the teaching material includes reading questions for the class discussions like literal comprehension, reorganization, inferential comprehension, evaluation, and

appreciation. Overall, the teaching material was structured into three main parts: (1) pre-reading, (2) while-reading, and (2) post-reading activities (See Appendix: Teaching Material).

### ***Teaching Procedures***

The entire teaching procedures were based on the following lesson plan:

#### **A Lesson Plan for an Intensive Reading Class**

Date	: March 19, 2008
Time	: 47 Minutes
Class	: Mixed ability (ESL college students in different fields of study)
Level of Proficiency	: Intermediate
Subject	: English Language
Language Focus	: Intensive reading comprehension
Genre	: A short story
Text Type	: Narrative
Topic	: Searching for a Missing Husband
Goal	: Students will be able to apply such basic reading skills as literal comprehension, reorganization, referential comprehension, evaluation, and appreciation when reading the assigned text.
Prerequisites	: The students have sufficient schemata, and they have already known scanning and skimming skills.
Sources	: - Online stories from ESL Fast Web - Teacher-made materials
Materials	: - Student worksheets - LCD + Screen
Procedures	

#### *Pre-reading (12 minutes)*

- Start the lesson
- Distribute quiz worksheets to the students
- Activate students' background knowledge
- Introduce the students some qualities of a character and vocabularies in the text
- Ask the students to predict what a topic they are going to read

#### *While-reading (31)*

- Distribute reading texts
- Get the students to read the text silently
- Have the students discuss the reading questions in pairs/groups
- Have the whole class discussion

#### *Post-reading (4 Minutes)*

- Explain assignments for the next class period
- Close the lesson

### ***Videotaped Data***

The lesson was video recorded until the end of the session. Before the session began, I asked my fellow to volunteer as a videographer. He videotaped the whole session. Once the camera along with the tripod was already set up, he signaled me to start the lesson. Once the lesson was done, I transferred the videotaped data into a MPG version recording so that I could play the recording in a MP4 player.

### ***Videotaped Data Analysis***

In analyzing the videotaped data, I used a variety of instruments like ethnographic micro-analysis, selective verbatim transcripts, Seating Chart Observation REcord (SCORE), conversational analysis, and Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF) sequences. I have a number of reasons for choosing such data analysis instruments. First, ethnographic microanalysis was used to review the entire lesson in detail so as to select the different foci of the observed behaviors (Erickson, 1992; Richards & Lockhart, 1994) and provide “an objective record of what actually took place” in the class (Wallace, as cited in Bailey, 2006, p. 124). More importantly, the ethnographic microanalysis enabled me to connect the detail to the big picture of the event by replaying the recording many times (DuFon, 2002).

Second, selective verbatim transcripts helped me to look at such specific details as teacher’s questions, teacher’s responses to students’ statements/questions, students’ responses to teacher’s questions, or students’ questions. Such selective verbatim transcripts also assisted me in doing conversational analysis on teacher-student and student-student interactions. Third, SCORE allowed me to sketch the amounts of teacher’s and students’ talks in teacher-student and student-student interactions, and conversational analysis enabled me to see what types of conversational utterances or speech acts took place in teacher-student and student-student interactions. Last, IRF was used to look at what the nature of initiation, response, and feedback in teacher-student and student-student interactions occurred.

Further, the procedures of the data analysis include:

- 1) Review the overall event to examine the entire sequences of the reading lesson without pausing or using slow motion;
- 2) Take notes while watching the video; the notes were written based on pre-, while, and post-reading activities. These notes were used for writing descriptive narratives or prose descriptions of the entire lesson;
- 3) Identify major constituent parts of the reading lesson by playing and replaying the videotaped data forward and backward to identify any detail of the pre-, while, and post-reading stages;
- 4) Identify aspects of organization within major parts of the lesson, involving the pre-, while, and post-reading activities;

- 5) Identify the actions of individuals by doing detailed transcription of the verbal and nonverbal behaviors of the participants involved in the lesson so that the detailed understanding of the behavioral organization of interactional events could be identified;
- 6) Examine the whole audiovisual records to determine if there were exceptions, which made conclusions less than comprehensive;
- 7) Select the focused behaviors for data analysis;
- 8) Code the selected data so that these were written in an organized manner;
- 9) Analyze and interpret the selected data in non-judgmental and qualitative ways;
- 10) Reflect on the data analyzed; and
- 11) Draw conclusions of the entire data analyzed

Thus, the analysis instruments above allowed me to contemplate, deliberate, and ponder the data before drawing a conclusion of the entire lesson (DuFon, 2002), and hence enabled me to do provide detailed prose descriptions, and to do careful analysis and reflection of my teaching performance as a whole.

### **Data Analyses and Discussions**

Based on the data that I coded, I highlight twelve main selected issues, as consecutively presented as follows.

#### ***The Structure of a Reading Lesson into Three Stages***

The pre-, while-, and post-reading reading stages helped me organize the lesson in order to provide the students with step-by-step instruction. Such teaching procedures enabled me to predict how much time I had to spend on each stage, and decided what kinds of learning activities that the students would go through in one lesson. I had different purposes of each stage in the reading lesson. First, the pre-reading stage was intended to provide a smoother transition for the students to the reading stages. This stage allowed the students to activate their schemata or background knowledge of a reading topic and arouse students' interest in the assigned reading text. Second, the while-reading stage enabled the students to read silently for particular information and the global understanding of the text. This stage also allowed for building conversational interactions for meaning negotiation between the students and me and among the students.

Last, the post-reading stage was designed to extend the understanding of the students learned at the pre-reading and while-reading stages into other learning tasks like writing a short story. Such tasks were geared to connect the reading tasks the students experienced in the classroom to writing tasks because both reading and writing are "essentially inter-related and mutually reinforcing" (Kumaravadivelu, 2006, p. 206). In short, the post-reading allowed the students to work on a follow-up activity (i.e., writing a short story) related to what they learned, and informed them of what they would learn in the next class period.

Thus, the three reading stages above corroborate the concept of "structuring," as defined by Richards (1990), referring to the clarity of the teacher's intention and se-

quence/structure of instructional activities. Organizing the entire lesson allowed for managing timing and pace to keep students alert, motivated, and engaged in reading activities (Wajnryb, 1992) in such a way to help the students develop their reading skills.

### ***Types of Questions for the Pre-reading Stage***

In the pre-reading phase, I generally asked the students three main categories of leading questions: (1) open-ended, (2) content-based, and (3) lexically-oriented questions. The purpose of the first category (i.e., “did you ever read a short story?” or “what kind of the short story (e.g., epic, humor, or romance) did you read?”) was primarily aimed at activating students’ schemata. Activating students’ schemata helped the students comprehend the text they were going to read. As Anderson (1999) pinpoints, much empirical research on second language reading shows that schemata facilitate reading comprehension and reading skill acquisition. The idea of schemata influencing reading comprehension implies that meaning does not rely merely upon the printed words, but that students bring certain knowledge, experience, emotion, and culture to the reading that affects comprehension (Brown, 2007). This notion corroborates Keshavarz, Atai, and Ahmadi’s findings (2007) that schemata have a significant effect on EFL reading comprehension. Thus, students’ schemata are believed to be facilitative of reading comprehension.

Regarding the content-based question, I asked the students the question about some qualities/traits of a character (i.e., hard work, confidence, or altruism) that they admire when reading a short story. This question was intended to relate such qualities to the main character in the reading text so that the students could predict what kind of story they would read. In this question, I did not tell these qualities related to those of the main character so that the students could express their own opinions about the character qualities that they like when reading the short story.

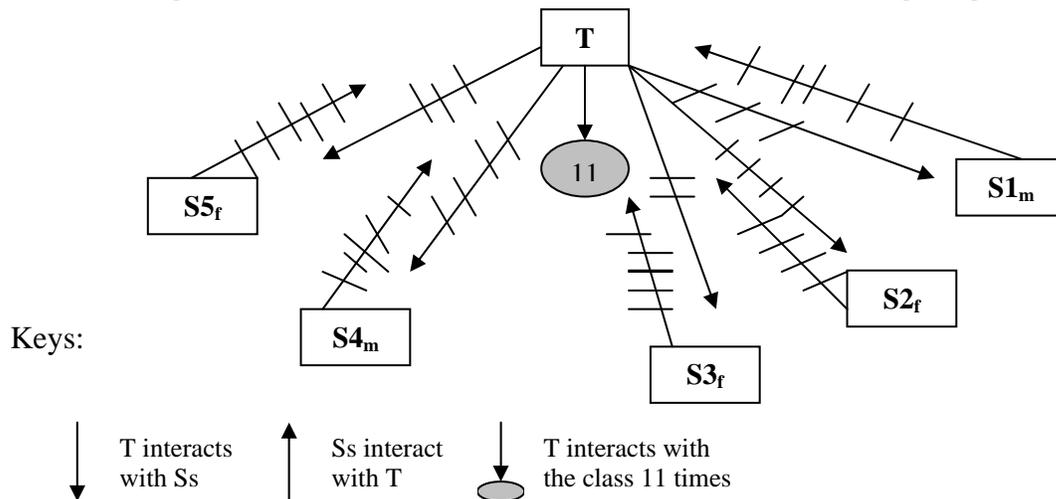
At last, the questions for lexical items provided the students with linguistic input. I chose some difficult words (i.e., “desperate,” “look into,” “smuggle,” or “track down”), which they might not know. To save time, I designed such questions in a matching question form. That lexical input could help the students to comprehend the text (Anderson, 1999) although the questions were de-contextualized. Further, to reduce students’ cognitive loads, I asked the students to work in pairs. Working in pairs could create student-student interactions for negotiating lexical meanings so that they could acquire new vocabularies (Hunt & Beglar, 2005). Thus, providing lexical input in the pre-reading stage could enhance students’ reading comprehension (Hunt & Beglar) and anticipate particular lexical items with which the students might be unfamiliar.

In summary, the three types of the questions allowed the students to see what they have known about the topic. More crucially, such questions could promote conversational interactions between the teacher and the students (Chaudron, 1988). Those questions could also help the students predict what a text they were going to read or allow the students to realize how much they knew about the topic of the text (Day & Park, 2005), and in turn lead them to the next reading stage.

### *The Nature of Teacher-Student and Student-Student Interactions in the Pre-reading Stage*

In the pre-reading activity, the teacher-student interaction can be seen in the following figure.

**Figure 1. Teacher-Student Interaction at the Pre-reading Stage**



As Figure 1 shows, in the students' schemata activation session, I nominated the students to express their opinions about their experience in reading short stories. The reason for nominating students' talks was to encourage the students to participate actively and equally in sharing their experiences in reading short stories, and I had to balance students' turn-taking at talks, as seen in the following excerpt 1:

- T: Did you ever read a short story?  
 Ss: Yes ((the class responded together))  
 T: How about you:: Adel?  
 S1<sub>m</sub>: Yes::  
 T: What kind of a short story did you read?  
 S1<sub>m</sub>: Short story umm...last time umm (.) I read about umm (.) he is from Saudi Arabia (.) this man is Aqtar Muhammad (.) his story is about the...when he moved from Pakistan to Saudi Arabia like 15 years ago from yeah it's about when he moved from Pakistan/  
 T: Is it err adventurous romantic or humorous short story?  
 S1<sub>m</sub>: Yeah humorous/

Based on the IRF pattern, the teacher's initiation "Did you ever read a short story?" indicates giving the floor to the whole class. Since the class responded together, I nominated one of the students to share his experience in reading a short story. I asked the follow-up

questions to know more information about the story and the genre of it that the student read. My intention of asking the leading and follow-up questions was to activate the student's background knowledge, not to evaluate the student's utterances. Thus, the IRF-oriented participation is interpreted as instances of teacher scaffolding (Wood, as cited in Kinginger, 2002) in which the teacher acted as a mediator for dialogic teacher-student interaction.

Further, when I posed the question to the class about the qualities of a character in a story, I did not nominate students' talks because the students immediately responded to the question. I thought the students already knew what to say, so they expressed their own justifications for their answers. As a whole, the purposes of the teacher talks were (1) to give prompts; (2) to provide explanations; (3) to ask for clarification, elaboration, and confirmation; (4) to steer the students towards pre-planned reading stages; (5) to warm the class up; (6) to give feedback; (7) to encourage the students to engage in the learning process; (8) to manage students' turn taking at talks; and (9) to guide students' learning (Christie & Mercer, as cited in Lee, 2006). Most of the questions I asked were referential because I did not test out the students' comprehension, but activated their background knowledge.

In addition, in the lexical question session, 18 second silence took place, so I immediately decided to ask the students to work in groups because I wanted to make the class more interactive. As a result, the student-student interaction occurred, and the class became interactive, as seen the following excerpt 2:

- S4<sub>m</sub>: I know (.) I know just "smuggle" (.) "desperate" what is the "desperate"?
- S5<sub>f</sub>: [err] eager to know/
- S4<sub>m</sub>: What again? Umm...
- S5<sub>f</sub>: Eager (.) to be eager/ do you know "eager"?
- S4<sub>m</sub>: eager eager ((thinking))

Based on Excerpt 2, the students negotiated the meaning of the word "desperate." In this case, some conversational utterances (i.e., asking a question, giving information, asking for a clarification, and comprehension checks) took place. In this situation, the students interacted with one another to complete the task for lexical questions. In this respect, my role was to monitor the groups; if the students needed my help, I would intervene in the pair discussion. The student-student interaction lasted only for 2 minutes and 10 second. Then, I guided the class to discuss the answers for the lexical questions that the students shared in groups. The students, immediately, responded to the questions. I just gave scaffolding by providing further confirmation when the students gave the answers.

Thus, the quality of the teacher talks is more important than its quantity (Kumaravadivelu & Seedhouse, as cited in Walsh, 2003) because a teacher has a responsibility for creating and maintaining classroom communicative competence, recognizing that learning opportunities are jointly constructed, but primarily determined by the teacher.

### ***Silent Reading Activity in the While-reading Stage***

Before the students discussed the reading questions, they were told to read silently without the teacher's interruption. This activity allowed the students to read the text and to possibly notice particular linguistic features (i.e., difficult words that they might encounter) and non-linguistic features (e.g., plots of the story) in the text. More crucially, the silent reading activity allowed for students' gaining a sense of understanding the message of the input given because meaning was primary (Skehan, 1998). Thus, the goal of the silent reading was to afford the students an opportunity to read the text for the global understanding because the text could be message-based input and a trigger for getting the students involved in the next reading activities.

### ***Taxonomies of Comprehension Questions in the While-reading Stage***

The reading questions that the students worked on include ten questions with different taxonomies of comprehension, categorized based on the Day & Park's and Barrett's taxonomies, as seen in the Table 1. The reason for choosing both models was that they show representative levels of comprehension for the intensive reading lesson.

Based on the table, there were two literal comprehension questions. The purpose of asking such questions was to encourage the students to recall important details on the characters involved in the story and check student's basic understanding of the text. Further, there were three reorganization questions, basically based on a literal understanding of the text. Such questions required the students to use information from various parts of the text and combine such parts for additional understanding. Question 6 challenged the students to make inference or hypothesize characteristics/qualities of the main character. In this respect, the students needed to draw some related evidence from the text. Questions 8 and 9 required the students to use their global understanding of the text so as to determine what might happen next in the story. Thus, in the prediction questions, the students were to provide various answers with their own justifications, based on some evidence in the text and their personal experiences. Questions 7 and 10 asked the students to answer the questions with their feelings or verbalize their feelings about the text and the main character in which no answers were explicitly found in the text.

Based on the teacher-student and student-student interactions during the while-reading stage, the ten questions promoted interactive reading activities, which allowed the students to construct meaning using the text because most of the questions went beyond a literal understanding of the text. More crucially, throughout the group and class discussions regarding the reading questions, the students seemed to be motivated to answer such questions through dialogic negotiation for meaning. In short, those reading questions encouraged the students to interact with the text to create or construct meaning and in turn to think critically with the teacher's scaffolding.

**Table 1. Taxonomies of Comprehension Questions**

No	Questions	Taxonomies of Comprehension Questions	
		Day & Park	Barrett
1	Who were involved in the story?	literal comprehension	literal comprehension
2	Who was the main character in the story?	literal comprehension	literal comprehension
3	When did the event happen?	reorganization	reorganization
4	Where did the event take place?	reorganization	reorganization
5	Was there any conflict or problem in the story? If so, give a brief explanation of this issue.	reorganization	reorganization
6	How did the main character in the story look like regarding her personal traits?	inference	inferential comprehension*
7	Suppose you were a main character in the story, what actions would you take to find your husband?	personal response	Appreciation
8	Where had the main character's husband been?	prediction	inferential comprehension**
9	Would the main character find her husband? If so, give a brief explanation of this case.	prediction	inferential comprehension**
10	What moral messages could you learn from the story?	personal response	Evaluation

Note: \* Implicit ideas

\*\* Prediction

### *The Nature of Questions in the While-reading Stage*

Questioning is seen as a way to encourage students to pose, answer, and discuss questions. The practice of questioning touches not only on linguistic production but also on cognitive demands and on interactive purpose (Van Lier, as cited in Lee, 2006). When sharing the answers with the class for the comprehension questions, more inferential questions from the students and the teacher arose because in the reading activities, the students were not asked to demonstrate their understanding by answering literal comprehension questions, but required to display their capabilities of communicating the text particularly when answering the inferential, prediction, appreciation, and evaluation questions. In the classroom, such questions could promote genuinely communicative and cognitively complicated interactions. This conclusion does not mean to devalue display questions regarded as a stepping stone for accomplishing communicative and interactional competences (Lee, 2006).

### ***The Nature of Student-Student Interaction in the While-reading Stage***

The class worked in groups when they discussed the ten reading questions. This group discussion allowed the students to share their own opinions with each other; thereby promoting conversational interactions among the students. As I observed, when discussing questions 6-10, the students seemed to verbalize their feelings using the text content and character, as seen in the following excerpt 3.

- S4<sub>m</sub>: Okay number seven (.) you should answer this question suppose he were your husband?  
 S5<sub>f</sub>: ((reading the question)) I'll do the same thing/  
 S4<sub>m</sub>: Umm (.) you will go alone or (.) you will have to hire professional people-  
 S5<sub>f</sub>: Like...if I were her (.) I'll hire professionals...((laughter))  
 S4<sub>m</sub>: ((laughter))

Thus, the group discussion could encourage the students not merely to comprehend the global understanding of the text that they read, but also to develop students' reading comprehension skills like inferential comprehension, appreciation, and evaluation. These skills could promote interactive and meaningful reading activities that posit an interaction between the students and the text.

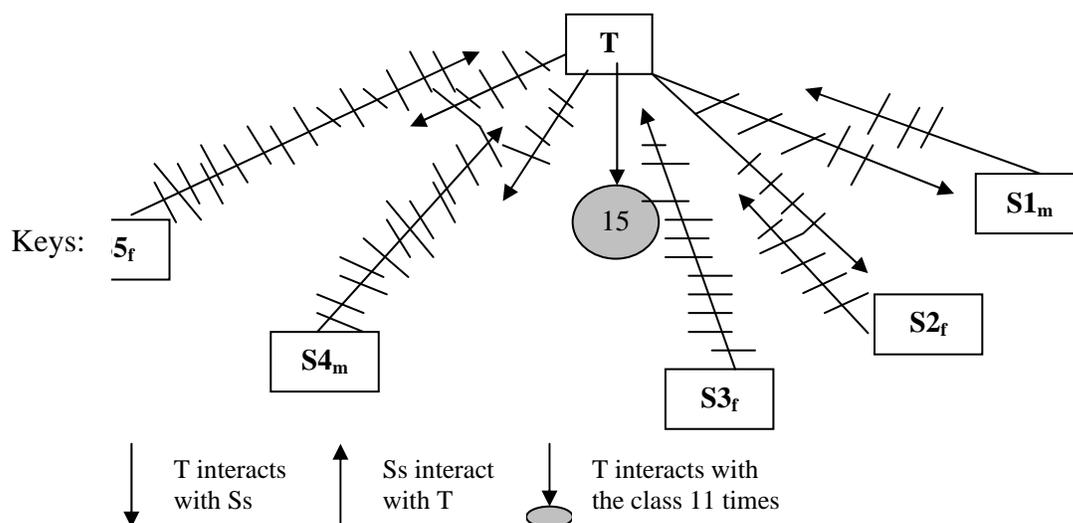
However, as I observed, during the group discussion, in one group, S3<sub>f</sub> seemed to dominate the discussion. Although two other students S1<sub>m</sub> and S2<sub>f</sub> were passive, they listened attentively to S3<sub>f</sub>. This unequal verbal participation in the discussion might be due to possible factors like personality, willingness to communicate, anxiety, cultural beliefs, and social and personal identities (Brown, 2007; Morita, 2004). In short, based on that case, participation could be associated with the interaction of mind. This notion suggests that participation be seen as both students' overtly verbal behaviors and internal communication of students' mind.

### ***The Nature of Teacher-Student Interaction in the While-reading Stage***

In the while-reading activity, the teacher-student interaction can be seen in Figure 2 below.

As seen in Figure 2, the students talked more than the teacher did because in discussing the answers for the comprehension questions, the teacher served as a facilitator who just provided the clarifications for the answers if required. Further, as Figure 2 shows, out of the five students, two students S1<sub>m</sub> and S2<sub>f</sub> were passive. This case was surprising because these students participated actively in the pre-reading activities, but at the while-reading stage, they might be unwilling to participate in the class discussion, or might have no chance to participate due to the other students' domination of the whole class discussion.

**Figure 2. Teacher-Student Interaction at the While-Reading Stage**



In spite of the unequal participation, when discussing questions 3-6, both students and the teacher engaged in more conversational interactions (e.g., asking for clarifications, elaborations, and confirmations). When discussing questions 7-9, the students mostly verbalized their feelings by giving justifications for their own opinions based on some evidence in the text. In this respect, I just provided some prompts if required. Because questions 3-9 are open-ended in nature, I asked the students to provide the answers along with good reasoning. Thus, in the teacher-student interaction, I acted as a scaffolding provider whose task was to promote dialogic interactions among the students for meaning negotiation and enhance students' global understanding of the text discussed.

### ***Integrating Language Skills in the Entire Classroom Activities***

In the whole reading activities, the students were asked not only to read the text, but also to communicate the content of the text with others. I got the students to express their own opinions (e.g., "Suppose you were the main character in the story, what actions would you take to find your spouse?"). In this case, the students performed reading, listening, and speaking skills altogether. Thus, I made an attempt to connect reading to speaking, and in turn speaking lends itself to listening. This effort corroborates this notion "language knowledge and ability are best developed when language is [integrally] learned and used..." (Kumaravadivelu, 2006, p. 206). In short, integrating reading with other language skills like listening and speaking is a way to promote interactive practices for a negotiation of meaning from input so as to produce comprehensible output (Johnson, 2004).

### ***Connecting Reading Activity to Writing Activity in the Post-reading Activity***

At the post-reading stage, I connected my reading lesson to writing activities through short story and reflective journal writing. In short story writing, the students were expected to apply the genre that they learned implicitly by writing a short story based on

students' memorable experience. That task could also be a medium of directly assessing what they learned, and would help the students prepare what they would learn from the next class period. In reflective journal writing, this would enable the students to reflect on what they learned during the pre-, while-, and post-reading activities, what they achieved from the entire lesson, what they did not achieve yet from the lesson, what aspects they would improve, and how they would make such improvements. In short, both tasks could provide more learning opportunities for the students outside the classroom.

### ***Roles of a Teacher, Students, and Teaching Material***

In designing and implementing the overall lesson, I played some crucial roles. These roles include: (1) choosing a suitable and interesting text, (2) selecting and sequencing the reading tasks to develop students' reading skills, (3) giving directions in the pre-, while-, and post-reading activities, (4) encouraging the students to get involved in the group and whole class discussions or facilitating the students to go through the three reading phases, and (5) providing scaffolding to the students as they went through reading activities.

Regarding the roles of the students, they played some roles in becoming active interactants. In this case, they were responsible for working on reading activities individually and collaboratively. Such interactions were dialogically negotiated in nature, and each student had an opportunity to produce comprehensible output with the teacher and peer's scaffolding. Further, the students served as negotiators when discussing the questions, which required their own background knowledge/experience along with good reasoning for their personal opinions.

Pertaining to the roles of the teaching material, this material served not only as instructional input for creating the reading tasks so that the student-student and teacher-student interactions were made possible in the classroom, but also as a useful guide for the teacher and students to go through pre-, while-, and post-reading activities. Thus, the entire role of the material could be a navigator for the teacher and students to work on all of the reading activities in the whole lesson.

### ***Connecting the Entire Lesson to SLA Theories***

All of the reading activities in this lesson reflect four main dimensions of second language acquisition (SLA). First, in the pre-reading activities, the teacher activated students' schemata by asking them personal questions. This idea is compatible with schema theory (cognitive SLA) that students' schemata facilitate them to comprehend the text (Hyon, 2002). Further, in this lesson, the teacher gave two types of input: (1) lexical input in the pre-reading activity and (2) text-based input in the while-reading activity. The former may help the students overcome unknown vocabulary when they read the text silently. The latter served as a trigger for the group and whole class discussions so that teacher-student and student-student interactions were made possible. In other words, that input is related to comprehensible input believed to help learners activate their internal mechanisms (e.g., prior knowledge) (Saville-Troike, 2006).

Third, during the teacher-student and student-student interactions, such conversational moves as asking and giving a clarification, confirmation, and elaboration and comprehension checks took place. Such moves are part of the comprehensible output and interactional hypothesis in which both cognitive and social dimensions are considered equally important and in turn students could negotiate or co-construct meaning so that the meaning is successfully rendered (Johnson, 2004; Mackey, 2006).

Last, teacher and peer's scaffolding occurred. The metaphor of scaffolding refers to verbal guidance in which the teacher or more capable students provide help so that the students or the less capable students perform a particular learning task easily or participate actively in the class. More crucially, in scaffolding, students should not be considered as passive recipients, but be considered as active learners (Saville-Troike, 2006). In other words, scaffolding facilitated the meaning negotiation and reading activities as a whole.

### **The Use of Video and Reflection in Higher Education and Teaching**

Videos and reflection have a close relationship because videos can serve as a mediating tool for critical and focused reflection. In addition, videos allow one to understand observational contexts when looking at videotaped data. In such a way, videotaped data enable one to recall what she or he observed, thereby enhancing a degree of reflexivity because videotape data can be played many times. Video recording can also enhance the validity or trustworthiness of the one's interpretation of being observed or done because the use of reflection and video recording altogether can be a means of method and data triangulation. By considering the reasons for blending videos and reflection, both are potentially applied to doing self observation or self appraisal for one's own teaching and reflective teaching. Both videos and reflection can be powerful tools for doing qualitative studies like ethnographic research, ethnographic classroom research, classroom action research, ethnographic classroom observation, participant observation, and ethnographic narrative inquiry (e.g., ethnographic auto-ethnography). Thus, videos and reflection can be tools for doing teacher professional development through reflective teaching and self-observation and carrying out qualitative research so as to improve or maintain teaching quality, thereby allowing teachers to better serve their students in higher educational contexts.

### **Conclusions**

Drawing from the video recorded data analyzes above, I would like to make three main points.

First, in one group, as I observed, one of the students nominated the group discussion. This observation suggests that student-student interaction could not automatically promote equal opportunities for the students to participate (Johnson, 1995). For this reason, it is crucial that providing particular roles to the students in group/pair discussions may promote equal opportunities because each student has a responsibility for contributing to the outcomes of class discussions (e.g., a list of the opinions shared during the discus-

sions). In short, such equal class participation would allow students to have a sense of ownership of the ideas shared (Tsui, 2007).

Second, noticing a particular text would help students spot particular features of the text before they were asked to discuss the reading questions. This noticing activity may include identifying linguistic and non-linguistic features of the text like identifying text types (i.e., narratives or recounts), text forms (e.g., short stories or newspaper articles), the generic structure of the text type (i.e. narratives: orientation, complications, resolutions, or coda), and particular grammatical features of the text type. Although SLA researchers (e.g., Truscott, 1998) have argued that the foundations of the noticing hypothesis in cognitive psychology are weak due to a lack of its empirical evidence, in language teaching and learning, noticing activities have played crucial roles in internalizing new knowledge and rule linguistically (Doughty, 2001; Schmidt, 2001) and helping learners become aware of non-linguistic features of the given input or task (Skehan, 1998).

Third, allowing students to initiate class discussion and participate fully in it is the key to promoting student-centered learning and teaching activity. In other words, providing the students a chance to read the questions and to talk more in the pair/group discussions would facilitate students' greater participation, thereby tapping their potentials to take more initiative and responsibility for their own learning (Clifton, 2006). In this respect, a teacher should position herself or himself as a facilitator whose task is to assure students' active engagement in both in-group and whole class discussions.

Overall, in the reading lesson, the students participated in the pre-, while-, and post-reading activities, and they engaged in dialogic interactions for meaning negotiation. In this regard, the students not only comprehended the global understanding of the text, but also developed their reading comprehension skills. More importantly, teacher scaffolding may be of great help to building a personally and academically enhancing classroom communication atmosphere.

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### Appendix: Reading Material

#### Pre-reading Zone

**A** *Questions for Schema Activation*

1. Did you ever read a short story?
2. If so, what kind of the short story (e.g., epic, humor, romance, etc.) did you read?
3. What kinds of short stories are you interested in reading?
4. Does reading the stories benefit you? Give a reason for this.

**B** *Put a check (✓) on the table of the survey questions below. Share your answers with your partner(s)*

What are some qualities/traits of a character that you admire when reading a story?



No.	Traits	Yes	No
1.	hardworking		
2.	unselfish		
3.	brave		
4.	persevering		
5.	self-sacrificing		
6.	confident		
7.	independent		
8.	desperate		
9.	decisive		
10.	loyal		

**B** *Match the following words with the words in the box below. Work in pairs.*

- |                          |                      |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. look into (____)      | 4. smuggle (____)    |
| 2. desperate (____)      | 5. squeeze (____)    |
| 3. interfere with (____) | 6. track down (____) |

A to find something or someone after looking for them in a lot of different places  
 B to press something firmly  
 C to prevent something from working effectively or from developing successfully  
 D to examine the facts about a problem or situation  
 E to take things or people to or from a place secretly and often illegally  
 F needing or wanting something very much

<b>Story Reading Zone</b>
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Read the following story carefully.

**Searching for a Missing Husband<sup>2</sup>**

Courtney had not heard from her husband in three weeks. Five weeks ago Jacob had gone to Iran to track down cigarette smugglers. He was working for a US company that was losing millions of dollars worth of cigarettes annually to criminal activity. He had communicated with Courtney at least once a day for the first two weeks. Then his calls and emails stopped coming.

5 Jacob was a retired FBI agent who had his own private investigation agency. He had no enemies that Courtney knew of. After the third day of not hearing from Jacob, Courtney contacted her US representative in Congress and her two US senators. They all said they would look into the matter. Three weeks later, after many calls from her, they all said they were still looking into the matter. Courtney had also made many calls to the US Embassy in Iran. The officials there told her they had no idea where her husband was, but they were “looking into it.”

10 Desperate to find her husband, Courtney flew to Tehran. She did not speak Farsi, and she knew nothing about Iran and nobody in Iran. All she knew was that she loved her husband and she would not leave Iran until she found him. If worse came to worst, she had decided to sell their house to continue her search. They had been married for forty years, and she loved him now as much as she had on her wedding day.

15 On her first day in Tehran, Courtney went to the US Embassy and told an official who she was and why she was there. The assistant to the deputy ambassador told her that she should return to the US, and leave the investigation to “professionals.” She politely refused, saying that the “professionals” had so far discovered absolutely nothing. He said that these things took time. He told her that her efforts would interfere with official efforts, and might even put her life in danger. She told him that she would gladly risk her life in order to find her husband. He said he had to go to a meeting. “Go home,” he ordered. Frustrated, she walked out of the embassy and sat down on the steps outside. With her head in her hands, she wondered what her next step would be.

20 Minutes later, a well-dressed Iranian man walked over to her and asked, in fluent English, if he could be of any assistance. He offered Courtney a handkerchief. He sat down next to her. She looked at a kind, caring face, and felt hope for the first time in almost a month. She explained her situation to the man. He frowned. He told her that cigarette smugglers tolerated no one who got in their way. He said he would talk to some people he knew. He gave her his business card and the name of a good hotel to stay in. He said he would contact her at the hotel the next day. He squeezed her hands in his, and then said goodbye.

<sup>2</sup> Online Stories <http://www.eslfast.com/eslread/ss/s169.htm>, <http://www.eslfast.com/eslread/ss/s170.htm>

### Discussion Zone

*Discuss the following questions with your partner(s). Once you have finished discussing the questions in pairs, share your opinions with the class.*

1. Who were involved in the story?
2. Who was the main character in the story?
3. When did the event happen?
4. Where did the event take place?
5. Was there any conflict or problem in the story? If so, give a brief explanation of this issue.
6. How did the main character in the story look like regarding her personal traits?
7. Suppose you were a main character in the story, what actions would you take to find your spouse?
8. Where had the main character's husband been?
9. Would the main character find her husband? If so, give a brief explanation of this case.
10. What moral messages could you learn from the story?



### Post-reading Zone

- A.** Write a short story based on your memorable and appealing experience. Your story should include clear settings/characters, sequences of events, conflict(s)/problem(s), and an open/close-ended story whether the problem(s)/conflict(s) was/were resolved. Write up your piece in 200-250 words long in a separate worksheet.
- B.** *Write down a reflective journal on what you have learned from today's class in the following space.*